

MPY-5010
6 February 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Paraguay Bureau -- January 1985

I. GENERAL

A. The search to find the "black box" of Eastern Airlines flight 980, which crashed into Mount Illimani near La Paz on 1 January and on which all passengers died (including Ambassador Davis' wife, the Peace Corps acting director in Paraguay, and an Embassy Marine), was suspended the second week of January. The extremely high altitude of the crash, the inaccessibility of the crash cite, and the severe weather conditions brought the search and rescue effort to a halt. The Bolivian Government has said it would make another effort to retrieve the "black box" in April or May when the weather conditions may be more accommodating. As noted in last month's report, the flight's remains may be permanently entombed on Mount Illimani. Ambassador Davis, after a brief period to the States following the accident, has returned to the mission to assume his duties.

B. Some people here at the mission are beginning to believe that there is a "black cloud" currently hanging over the mission. Among other events, on the very day the Ambassador's family was holding an open house for condolence calls by the Paraguayan and American communities on the Eastern Airlines crash, the mission was again struck by tragedy. A local Embassy employee was accidentally killed on the 7th by a shot from a revolver brought into the Embassy compound by another local employee who wanted to sell it. As happens so many times in these tragic, needless "accidents," there was still a bullet in the chamber of the "unarmed" weapon. It discharged while the two employees were examining it.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. In Brazil, opposition candidate Tancredo Neves as expected soundly defeated government party candidate Paulo Maluf in the Electoral College on the 15th. The bureau monitored the Electoral College proceedings and Neves' victory speech live from Brasilia Domestic Service. The BBC sent "many thanks and congratulations" for the bureau's FYI reporting Neves' victory.

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-2-

2. Bolivian coverage during the month was again peppered with reports of aborted coup attempts and coup rumors. On the 9th, the cabinet resigned en masse, the second time in 2 months, and President Siles announced a new cabinet the next day. On the 16th, Bolivian radios reported the first of three aborted coup attempts by disgruntled former military officers. As the month closed, the recently dismissed Army commander was issuing statements which were denounced by the government as attempts to destabilize the government and provoke a military coup.

3. The bureau lost its Paris AFP Spanish coverage on the 1st when AFP switched over to satellite transmissions, 9 days earlier than expected. Since then, the bureau has been in constant touch with the AFP office to obtain the hookup. AFP, however, has been unable to service any of its customers in Paraguay at this writing. At first the bureau was told that the problem apparently was between AFP and ANTELCO in making technical arrangements on wiring the main AFP office; then it seemed to be problems between the local AFP office and its Paris headquarters. AFP has promised the bureau that it will be the first to be hooked up once the service is ready. Meanwhile, Panama bureau is backstopping Paraguay's coverage area for priority materials monitored from AFP.

B. Communications

Following a period of a couple of weeks during which the bureau received a considerable number of commo queries on garbled messages, the Embassy TCU on the 30th traced the problem to a defective board that caused distortion between the TCU and the Washington switch.

C. Lateral Services

In the wake of a visit to Paraguay by U.S. Congressmen Peter Kostinayer and Robert Torricelli--both members of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee-- which included an intense schedule of meetings with many Paraguayans, the bureau monitored a vicious, vituperative commentary aimed at the congressmen and Paraguayan opposition figures broadcast by the "Voice of Coloradismo." This is a radio program broadcast nightly by the ruling party. The Embassy's Political Section asked that the item be filed directly to the Department's Southern Cone desk.

D. Technical

1. A modified Frederick tape reader was received from London. It has been tested and installed and is working perfectly.

2. The following equipment was received during January:

- a) Frederick tape reader MOD 1403 SN from London Bureau.
- b) Two IBM personal computers, printers, and associated software from Headquarters.

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-3-

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. Following another local wage survey during the month, the Embassy forwarded to the Department the raw data and recommendation for a considerable cost-of-living increase across the board. At this writing, the mission awaits the Department's decision on what is unanimously agreed here as long over due considering the huge cost-of-living increases in Paraguay over the last 18 months. Headquarters has been advised of the details.

STAT 2. Monitor [] started a year's LWOP 25 January. She
STAT is moving to Montevideo, where she is getting married. It is possible
that she and her husband could move back to Asuncion in the coming year.
Meanwhile, the bureau has received permission to recruit against []
position. The recruitment effort will begin following the end of the
summer vacation hiatus here in Paraguay, the second half of February.

IV. VISITS

- STAT 1. C/E&PS [] TDY to bureau 26-28 January.
- STAT 2. [] a former senior editor at Paraguay Bureau,
STAT visited the bureau on the 23d while on private travel.

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Chief, FBIS Paraguay Bureau

CC: Chief, Panama Bureau

Attachment: Monthly Production Report